

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino

Josie Gonzales Fifth District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUPERVISOR GONZALES COMMENDS 5TH DISTRICT CITIZENS FOR THEIR EFFORTS THIS YEAR TO IMPROVE THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

SAN BERNARDINO – Great strides were made in 2005 to improve the communities of the County of San Bernardino's 5th supervisorial district.

The credit is due to the participation and dedication of the citizens of those communities, said 5th District Supervisor Josie Gonzales.

The 5th District includes the cities of Colton, Fontana, Rialto and San Bernardino and unincorporated communities of Arrowhead Farms, Bloomington, El Rancho Verde, Muscoy and North Norton.

One of the shining examples was the success of the community clean up program throughout the 5th District.

County Code Enforcement and Solid Waste increased the number of community clean up events in the district from seven in 2004 to 10 in 2005. Residents responded to an even greater degree to the free dumpsters brought into their neighborhoods in 2005– more than doubling the amount of trash they threw out. ([See attachment.](#))

“That residents rolled up their sleeves this year to clean up the appearance of their neighborhoods is very encouraging,” Supervisor Gonzales said. “Their hard work is a sign of their growing pride in their communities. It is an important first step for these residents to be able to accomplish great things in 2006.”

Residents also in 2005 debated how to best manage future improvements to their neighborhoods.

As part of the County's General Plan update, Bloomington and Muscoy residents and County Planning officials held numerous meetings to set priorities for future land use in their communities.

Bloomington and Muscoy residents also researched and discussed the tools of redevelopment law to generate moneys for community improvements.

The disagreements that surfaced during these community meetings were necessary to ensure that the future of these neighborhoods is based on a sound foundation.

“I understand there are residents who fear any change to the communities they love,” Gonzales said. “But with economic growth spreading throughout the Inland Empire, change is certain. If the residents and the County do not draw a map for the future, their opportunity to manage this growth will be lost.”

To encourage a larger and more diverse number of residents and property owners to participate in the community planning process, Supervisor Gonzales in 2005 appointed new citizens to the Municipal Advisory Councils in Bloomington and Muscoy. The council members during regular monthly meetings gather public input on a range of topics that affect their community and forward their findings to Supervisor Gonzales to assist in the decision-making process.

Supervisor Gonzales plans in 2006 to expand the size of the councils in Bloomington, El Rancho Verde and Muscoy to better represent the growing population in those communities.

In an effort to make government of their community more local, residents of Bloomington studied the feasibility of establishing a city and submitted their findings to the County Local Agency Formation Commission.

As it is a grassroots effort, Supervisor Gonzales has supported the reduction and waiver of application costs that would normally be charged to the Bloomington Incorporation Commission. For example, she allocated up to \$10,000 in 5th District discretionary funds to cover attorney’s fees for the legal review of the group’s application.

During 2005, Supervisor Gonzales secured and directed about \$7.8 million to 5th District communities for community improvements and services, including parks, senior centers and sidewalks to provide safe routes to schools for children. ([See attachment.](#))

“When the County is fortunate enough to have a budget surplus, we must be frugal in how we spend taxpayers’ money,” Gonzales said. “I support the County’s practice of banking substantial reserves for leaner fiscal times. We must also invest in our communities to nurture future prosperity.”

Supervisor Gonzales also expects that her role in reenergizing local perchlorate clean up efforts will result in millions of federal dollars coming to the area in 2006. At the urging of Supervisor Gonzales, leaders of the cities of Colton and Rialto, West Valley Water District and Fontana Water Company in 2005 put aside their differences and lobbied Washington, D.C. as a unified group.